MANY MANY MOONS

LEW SARETT

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MANY MANY MOONS

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MANY MANY MOONS

A BOOK OF WILDERNESS POEMS

BY

LEW SARETT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

CARL SANDBURG

NEW YORK

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1920

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TO
MY WIFE
MARGARET
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

16787

PREFACE

The specific words and phrases which the American Indian utters in song and ceremony are few and fragmentary. In their original forms of expression the utterances of Indian dance, song, and ritual are often crude and inadequate. Literal translation, therefore, will rarely reveal the emotional and ideational content of a ceremony. For example, the only words uttered in the course of a long and richly meaningful scalp-dance song may be the following:

> "I am dancing in the sky,
> I am dancing in the sky
> With a Sioux scalp."

The few fragmentary phrases may be repeated over and over again, interspersed with apparently meaningless syllables and ejaculations. The meager phrase in a medicine song may be slight in its denotation; it can represent merely the peaks of an emotional flight, or it can merely symbolize a great situation. Yet if the fragmentary ideas be interpreted against a background of legend, or supplemented by the accompanying incidents of the dance,—its music, postures, gestures, and vocal embellishments,—if they be refracted through the prismatic glass of Indian imagination, the few words that are uttered may suggest

a great colorful complex of ideas and emotions. The poems of Indian theme in Parts I and III of this volume, therefore, are in no sense literal translations of original utterances of aboriginal song and council-talk; they are, rather, very free, broad interpretations. I have endeavored to interpret most broadly the original Indian motives through their suggestive connotations,—in the light of Indian symbolism and mysticism, of the mythology and superstition involved, and of the attendant ceremonies.

Although I have been very free in my interpretations, I have endeavored to maintain steadily and accurately the consciousness of the genuine American Indian of today, his peculiar mental and emotional slants. I have sought, moreover, to maintain consistently the point of view of the modern reservation type of red man,—more copper or bronze than red,—who in his present transition from the primitive wild life to the new civilization offers a paradoxical amalgam or mosaic of the old and the new, the ideal and the material, the majestic and the grotesque.

The romantic red man in the picturesque setting of war-dances and ambuscaded prairie schooners has gone the way of the buffalo, the flintlock, and the stone-ax. With him has gone much of the romantic beauty of the wild yesterdays; the old glory of the lawless Indian frontier has grown a bit faded and tawdry. Yet in the life and the aspirations of the red man of today, and particularly in the character of the more remote, primitive Northern woods Indian, there is a new, strange, often bizarre beauty which,

because of the economic and social complexities created by modern reservation life, is infinitely more colorful and kaleidoscopic than that of the old romantic days. In this transitional type of the Original American there is a rugged charm distinctive of the New World, and of the race of pioneers that struggled here to beat back the wilderness and to fling out the borders of a new civilization. About this bronze figure, the symbol of our vanished West and of our beaten borderlands, hovers a wild poetic beauty as peculiarly American in fragrance as the redolence of burning pine, or the odor of a cornfield after rain.

Beneath the drab surface of the modern transitional type of Indian in his semi-civilized setting of the reservation there is comedy, cosmic tragedy, and a wealth of literary materials that are epic in sweep. Consider the pathos of his desperate struggle of three centuries to stem the tide of a subtle, irresistible civilization, to withstand the ravages of the white man's diseases, to beat off the packs of astute grafters who were ever ready to pounce upon him as wolves upon a wounded deer. In the great drama enacted in the American wilderness these bronze stoics have played every rôle,—hero and villain, hunter and hunted, victor and vanquished; yesterday defiant, imperious, battling victoriously with naked hands against storm and wind and snow and cyclone, against man and beast and hunger and pestilence; today poverty-stricken, servile, making their exit in the West and the North, a handful of broken people, a thin line of bedraggled figures in the twilight, straggling across the desert

with muffled footfall into the Valley of Night to the ultimate companionship of the stars.

In much of the seeming cacophony of the modern Indian's music there is lyric poetry. In the primitive dances to which the pagan elder folk have clung so tenaciously, and in which today the Indian sings his soul out of its rags back for a moment to the old glory of the wild days, there is a pungent, elemental charm. Rugged dignity and power mark his council oratory. A pagan spiritual beauty glitters in all the religious rituals that express his cosmic theory; for his pantheistic conception of the phenomena of nature is sublime in its personification of the wilderness, in its humanization of earth and sky and water, of beast and bird and reptile, of the flash of the lightning, the rumble of thunder, and the roar of the big winds. In the supernatural world created by his imagination there is a weird mysticism; for the Indian walks through life ever beckoned by unseen hands, ever communing with the ghosts of the unseen spirit of beast and devil and god.

His life is not, however, wholly in shadow; it has its high lights of comedy and humor. There is humor in his naïve attempts to adapt himself to the white man's mode of living with its baffling machines and its incomprehensible customs; sometimes a ludicrous incongruity in his domestic environment with its agglomeration of primitive birch-basket and battered alarm clock, papoose cradle and broken sewing machine,—the latter often purchased as a thing of ornament rather than of utility,—quaint stone pestle and

mortar and the badge of affluence, that *sine qua non* of Indian aristocracy, the cheap talking machine eternally playing its one record. There is unconscious humor, and often subtle wit, in much of his talk, and in his modern dialect, a hybrid language in which the simple dignity of the old poetic diction is now shot through with the mixed idioms, the crudities, and the twisted phrases of borderland slang and of French-Canadian *patois*. The comedy in his character,—largely the humor of grotesqueness, inconsistency, and paradox,—is best suggested perhaps by the incongruities of the costume which he often wears at some idealistic old ceremonial dance; a nondescript outfit composed of buckskin moccasins and conspicuous white man's underwear, beaded medicine bag and shoddy trousers, eagle feathers and a battered derby hat.

It is the spirit of this more modern type of Indian,—and particularly of the more remote Northern woods Indian of Algonquian stock,—with his peculiar anachronistic combination of the primitive and the modern, the tragic and the comic, the ideal and the real, the romantic and the drab, the spiritual and the material,—it is the spirit of this transitional type of red man which I wish to catch in Part I and Part III of this volume. I desire, furthermore, not only to catch the spirit of the woods Indian, but also, through the nature poems in Part II, to capture something of the atmosphere of the Indian's environment, of his setting of the Northern wilderness. If, therefore, the poems in this book convey in some degree

the wild beauty of the North, and of its wilderness folk, a beauty so inadequately expressed by the printed word, I shall be most happy. If they do not thus succeed—it was Walter Savage Landor—was it not? —who said, "There is delight in singing, though none hear beside the singer."

Although a few of the poems in Parts I and III presuppose on the part of the reader some knowledge of the American Indian, most of them will readily yield their meaning without the aid of supplementary notes. I have incorporated in each poem most of the special information concerning Indian folk-lore of which the casual reader may not be informed. Likewise, the correct pronunciation of the various Chippewa words which are used is made clear by the accents and the phonetic spelling; and their meanings may be readily grasped from their context. However, for the benefit of the reader who may be interested in further details concerning the ceremonials and legends that lie at the foundation of certain of the poems, I have added a brief section of expository comments in the Appendix, beginning on page 71. I suggest that the reader glance at these supplementary notes before reading the poems in Part I and Part III upon which they bear.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Miss Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, to Mr. Carl Sandburg, and to Professor Stuart P. Sherman of the University of Illinois for their encouragement and their helpful suggestions, and to many other friends for valuable criticisms.

LEW SARETT.

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INTRODUCTION

Books say Yes to life. Or they say No. "Many Many Moons" says Yes.

Picking classics in contemporary books is like picking winners in baseball or durable forms of government among nations. One man's guess is as good as another's.

We might say, "Herewith is entered Lew Sarett and 'Many Many Moons' as a runner for a place among the classics." And it would be only a guess.

However, there is nothing in the stipulations of the Espionage Act nor in the Code of Chesterfield nor in the Marquis of Queensbury rules, that stops us from asking:

"Why not have the loam and the lingo, the sand and the syllables of North America in the books of North America?"

And so Sarett . . . with tall timber, freshwaters, blue ducks, and a loon in him. The loon, a poet's bird for sure, is here. Unless there is a loon cry in a book the poetry is gone out of it. We have too many orderly, respectable, synthesized poets in the United States and in England. In their orientation with the library canary fed from delicatessen tins, they are strangers to the loon that calls off its long night cry in tall timber up among the beginnings of the Mississippi.

Sarett has equipment. Years a forest ranger and a woodsman, other years a wilderness guide, companion of red and white men as an outrider of civilization, university instructor, headline performer at western Chautauquas, magazine writer, he brings wisdom of things silent and things garrulous to his book. Old men with strong heads and shrewd slow tongues, young men with tough feet, the wishing song of mate for mate—they are here. The loam and the lingo, the sand and the syllables of North America are here. "Many Many Moons" says Yes.

CARL SANDBURG.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Of the poems in Part I and Part III of this book, many were first published in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. The author is indebted to the editors for permission to include them in this volume. For the privilege of reprinting other copyrighted poems in this book he wishes to thank the editors of the following: *Reedy's Mirror; The Outing Magazine; The Stratford Journal; The Argosy Magazine; Others; Outdoor Life; Birds and Nature Magazine;* the *Nature-Study Review; American Forestry; Outer's Book and Recreation; The Farm Journal; The Pagan; The Boston Transcript.*

L. S.

PART I

FLYING MOCCASINS

THE BLUE DUCK *

To be read with a vigorous lilt emphasizing the drumbeats.

Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi!
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi!
Heé-ya! Hói-ya!
Heé-ya! Hói-ya!
Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
The hunter-moon is chipping,
Chipping at his flints,
At his dripping bloody flints;
He is rising for the hunt,
And his face is red with blood
From the spears of many spruces,
And his blood is on the leaves
That flutter down.
The Winter-Maker, White Bee-bóan,
Is walking in the sky,
And his windy blanket
Rustles in the trees.
He is blazing out the trail
Through the fields of nodding rice
For the swift and whistling wings
Of his She-shé-be,
For the worn and weary wings

* See *Appendix*, page 71, for supplementary comments concerning "The Blue Duck" and other poems in this group, Part I.

Of many duck—
Ho! Plenty duck! Plenty duck!
Ho! Plenty, plenty duck!

Hí! Hi!
Hí! Hi!
Hí! Hi!
Hí! Hi!
Hóy-eeeeeee! Ya!
Hóy-eeeeeee! Ya!

More slowly and quietly, verging on a chant.

Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
The seasons have been barren.
In the Moon-of-Sugar-Making,
And the Moon-of-Flowers-and-Grass,
From the blighted berry patches
And the maple-sugar bush,
The hands of all my children
Came home empty, came home clean.
The big rain of Nee-bín, the Summer-Maker,
Washed away the many little partridge.
And good Ad-ík-kum-áig, sweet whitefish,
Went sulking all the summer-moons,
Hiding in the deepest waters,
Silver belly in the mud,
And he would not walk into my nets! Ugh!
Thus the skin-sacks and the mó-kuks
Hang within my weég-a-wam empty.

Soon the winter moon will come,
Slipping through the silent timber,
Walking on the silent snow,

Stalking on the frozen lake.
Lean-bellied,
Squatting with his rump upon the ice,
The phantom wolf will fling
His wailings to the stars.
Then Weén-di-gó, the Devil-Spirit,
Whining through the lodge-poles,
Will clutch and shake my teepee,
Calling,
Calling,
Calling as he sifts into my lodge;
And ghostly little shadow-arms
Will float out through
The smoke-hole in the night—
Leaping, tossing shadow-arms,
Little arms of little children,
Hungry hands of shadow-arms,
Clutching,
Clutching,
Clutching at the breast that is not there. . .
Shadow-arms and shadow breasts. . .
Twisting,
Twisting,
Twisting in and twisting out
On the ghastly clouds of smoke. . .
Riding on the whistling wind. . . .
Riding on the whistling wind. . . . . .
Riding on the whistling wind. . . . . .
Starward! . . .
Blow, blow, blow Kee-wáy-din, North Wind,
Warm and gentle on my children,

To be chanted from this point on—slower in rate—higher and higher in pitch—mounting to melancholy wailing.

A sustained wailing chant, gathering power steadily.

Cold and swift upon the wild She-shé-be,
Ha-a-ah-eee-ooo . . . Plenty duck . . .
Ha-a-a-a-ah-eeee-ooooo . . . Plenty duck. . . .

Faster—with a lilt—dancing rhythm.

Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi!
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi!
Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
Blow on Ah-bi-tóo-bi many wings;
Wings of teal and wings of mallard,
Wings of green and blue.
My little lake lies waiting,
Singing for her blustery lover;
Dancing on the golden-stranded shore
With many little moccasins,
Pretty little moccasins,
Beaded with her silver sands,
And with her golden pebbles.
And upon her gentle bosom
Lies Mah-nó-min, sweetest wild-rice,
Green and yellow,
Rustling blade and rippling blossom—
Hi-yee! Hi-yee! Blow on Áh-bi-tóo-bi plenty duck!
Ho! Plenty, plenty duck!
Ho! Plenty duck, plenty duck!
Ho! Ho!

Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi! Hi! Hi!
Hée-ya! Hói-ya! Hée-ya! Hói-ya!
Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
I place this pretty duck upon your hand;
Upon its sunny palm and in its windy fingers.

Hi-yeee! Blue and beautiful
Is he, beautifully blue!
Carved from sleeping cedar
When the stars like silver fishes
Were a-quiver in the rivers of the sky;
Carved from dripping cedar
When the Kóo-koo-kóo dashed hooting
At the furtive feet
That rustle in the leaves—
Hi! And seasoned many moons, many moons,
Ho! Seasoned many, many, many sleeps!
Hi-yeee! Blue and beautiful
Is he, beautifully blue!
Though his throat is choked with wood,
And he honks not on his pole,
And his wings are weak with hunger,
Yet his heart is plenty good.
Hi-yee! His heart is plenty good!
Hi-yee! Plenty good, plenty good!
Hi-yee! Hi-yee! Hi-yee! His heart is good! . . .

Faster, louder, with a vigorous lilting beat—with abandon.

My heart like his is good!

Brokenly and brusquely.

Ugh! My tongue talks straight!

Ho!

CHIPPEWA FLUTE SONG

To be chanted softly and monotonously in a high pitch, with a downward inflection at the end of every sentence and at other places where the voice naturally falls.

Hah-eeeeeeeee-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!
My little Pigeon-Woman,
For you alone as I float in my little birch canoe in the purple twilight,
I am singing, I am calling
on my little cedar lute tenderly.
For you alone, for you alone I am playing
on my little yellow flute mellowly.
And though the singing of my throat is like the grumping of the frog
at night among the water-lilies,
yet the notes from my cedar Bée-bee-gwún
are like silver bubbles in the moonlight.
Therefore why do you hide away from me like the timid little fawn
that peers tremblingly at me
from yonder bending willows,
My little Pigeon-Woman,
My Kah-lée-lee-óh-kah-láy-kway!

Hah-eeeeeeee-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!
From the clouds of purple twilight on yonder shore
the wailing loon is calling, calling,
calling for his woman drearily.
And I am also calling
on my little yellow flute wearily.
In the dewy glade of yonder valley
the whip-poor-will is crying for his mate;
In the somber lonely shadows of the timber
the melancholy owl is also calling.
But the owl and the whip-poor-will
do not hear an answer
to their many, many callings—
Nor do I hear an answer to my melody.
The meadow-lark is fluting his golden song;
and from the lilied meadows
other golden notes come floating back to him
like little golden bells.
And though the meadow-lark does not sing more tenderly
than my little yellow flute,
you do not answer my callings,
My little Pigeon-Woman,
My Kah-lée-lee-óh-kah-láy-kway!

Hah-eeeeeeeee-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!
And now the purple wings of the night
are softly folded down
upon my sleeping little lake,
and the sighing silver balsams.

The cooing wood-dove has slipped her sleepy head
beneath her downy wings;
and the hermit-thrush
with his running-water notes
will pipe his song no longer.
The eyes of the many little stars are peering down
upon me from the sky steadily;
And the wan and sickly moon is smiling yellowly at
me—
I do not like the many little peering eyes,
I do not like the smiling yellow moon;
I love the sun that dances down the sky
with a swirl of scarlet robes,
her head flung back over her shoulder,
a taunting smile on her vermilion face. . . .
And now the flutings of my little Bée-bee-gwún avail
me no longer;
For you have flown away from me, you have flown
away from me
like the sun that slipped down behind the willows
trailing her purple veils behind her
on the shimmering waters of my lake
and over the edge of the world.
But tomorrow the sun will come back to me,
the sun will come back tomorrow,
My little Pigeon-Woman,
My Kah-lée-lee-óh-kah-láy-kway!

THE SQUAW-DANCE

Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum.
Hóy-eeeeeee-yáh! Hóy-eeeeeee-yáh!
Shuffle to the left, shuffle to the left,
Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left.
Fat squaws, lean squaws, gliding in a row,
Grunting, wheezing, laughing as they go;
Bouncing up with a scuffle and a twirl,
Flouncing petticoat and hair in a whirl.
Rheumatic hags of gristle and brawn,
Rolling in like a ponderous billow;
Fair squaws lithe as the leaping fawn,—
Swaying with the wind and bending with the willow;
Bouncing buttock and shriveled shank,
Scuffling to the drumbeat, rank on rank;
Stolid eye and laughing lip,
Buxom bosom and jiggling hip,
Weaving in and weaving out,
Hí! Hi! Hí! with a laugh and a shout,
To the beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum;
And a shuffle to the left, a shuffle to the left,
A shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left,—
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!

To be read rapidly with a vigorous lilt and syncopated dance rhythm.

Medicine men on the medicine drum,
Beating out the rhythm with a steady thrum.
Medicine gourd with its rattle, rattle, rattle,
Flinging wild with the call of battle.
Beaded drummers squatting in the ring
Leap to its challenge with a crouch and a spring;
Weathered old bucks that grunt and wheeze
As they jangle bells on their wrists and their knees,—
Shining new and olden bells,
Silver, copper, golden bells,
Cow-bells, toy bells, ringing sleigh-bells,
Beaded dance bells, "give-away" bells,
Jingling, jangling, jingling bells,
Set-the-toes-atingling bells,
To the beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum;
And a shuffle to the left, a shuffle to the left,
A shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left,—
Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!

Old bucks stamping heel and toe,
Ugh! as they snort and they cackle and they crow,—
Yowling like the lynx that crouches nigh,
Howling like the wolf at the prairie sky;
Growling and grunting as they shift and they tramp,
Stalking, crouching,—with a stamp, stamp, stamp,—
Sleek limbs, lithe limbs, strong and clean limbs,
Withered limbs, bowed limbs, long and lean limbs;
Flat feet, bare feet, dancing feet,
Buckskin-moccasined prancing feet,
Eager child-feet, scuffling feet,

Feet, feet, feet, feet, shuffling feet!
Hi! Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum;
Shuffle to the left, shuffle to the left,
Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left,—
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!

KEE-WÁY-DIN-Ó-KWAY, THE "NORTH-WIND-WOMAN," SINGS:

"I have a pretty present for Máh-een-gans,
For 'Little-Wolf' I have a pretty medicine bag.
Broidered upon it are many little beads
In many pretty patterns of wild lilies,—
Yellow beads and beads of the color of the cornflower.
Through the many winter moons
I labored on this token of love; *Dance ceases. To be chanted.*
In this gaily patterned medicine bag
I left my weary eyes and my worn fingers.
Now I wish 'the Wolf' to dance with me in the ring.
Hi! Beat, beat upon the drums, old medicine men!
Dance! Dance in the ring, my people, and sing!"

(*Ho! Ho! . . . Hí-yah! Hí-yah!*)

Hóy-eeeeeeeee-yáh! Hóy-eeeeeeeee-yáh! *With a lilt and dance rhythm.*
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeee-yáh!
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum,
As a bouncing breast and a lean long thigh,
Caper to the ring with a whoop and a cry,

And shuffle to the left, shuffle to the left,
Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left,—
Hí! Hí! Hí! Hí! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!

MÁH-EEN-GANS, THE "LITTLE-WOLF," SINGS:

"I have a present for the 'Wind-Woman,'
A present equal in value to her medicine bag.
Ho! A pretty present, a mí-gis chain *Dance ceases—chant.*
Of many little mí-gis shells,—
As beautiful as the 'North-Wind-Woman.'
My chain of shells will shimmer on her breast
As the little silver brooks that tinkle
Down the moonlit bosom of yonder mountain.
Now I wish the woman to dance with me in the ring.
Hí! Beat, beat upon the drums, old medicine men!
Dance! Dance in the ring, my people, and sing!"

Hóy-eeeeeeeeeee-yáh! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeee-yáh!
Hí! Hí! Hí! Hí! Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the tom-tom,
Beat, beat, beat, beat, beat upon the drum.
Medicine gourd with its rattle, rattle, rattle,
Ringing wild with the call of battle. *To be read with a vigorous, lilting dance rhythm, and with great spirit.*
Rheumatic hags of gristle and brawn,
Rolling in like a ponderous billow;
Fair squaws lithe as the leaping fawn,—
Swaying with the wind and bending with the willow.
Bouncing buttock and shriveled shank,
Scuffling to the drumbeat, rank on rank.
Old bucks stamping heel and toe,
Ugh! as they snort and they cackle and they crow,—

Sleek limbs, lithe limbs, strong and clean limbs,
Withered limbs, bowed limbs, long and lean limbs;
Flat feet, bare feet, dancing feet,
Buckskin-moccasined prancing feet;
Shuffle to the left, shuffle to the left,
Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to the left, to the left;
With a crouch and a spring and a grunt and a wheeze,
And a clanging of bells at the wrists and the knees,—
Shining new and olden bells,
Silver, copper, golden bells—
Feet, feet, feet, feet, scuffling feet!
To the drumbeat, drumbeat, beat, beat, beat—
Hí! Hi! Hí! Hi!
Hóy-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee-yáh!

BEAT AGAINST ME NO LONGER

Ai-yee! My Yellow-Bird-Woman,
My né-ne-moosh, ai-yee! my Loved-One,
Be not afraid of my eyes!
Beat against me no longer!
Come! Come with a yielding of limbs!
Ai-yee! Woman, woman,
Trembling there in the teepee
Like the doe in the season of mating,
Why foolishly fearest thou me?
Cast the strange doubts from thy bosom!
Be not afraid of my eyes!
Be not as the flat-breasted squáw-sich
Who feels the first womanly yearnings
And hides, by the law of our people,
Alone three sleeps in the forest;
Be not as that brooding young maiden
Who wanders forlorn in the cedars,
And slumbers with troubled dreams,
To awaken suddenly, fearing
The hot throbbing blood in her bosom,
The strange eager life in her limbs.
Ai-yee! Foolish one, woman,
Cast the strange fears from thy heart!
Wash the red shame from thy face!
Be not afraid of my glances!

Be as the young silver birch
In the Moon-of-the-Green-Growing-Flowers—
Who sings with the thrill of the sap
As it leaps to the south wind's caresses;
Who yields her rain-swollen buds
To the kiss of the sun with glad dancing.
Be as the cool tranquil moon
Who flings off her silver-blue blanket
To bare her white breast to the pine;
Who walks through the many-eyed night
In her gleaming white nudeness
With proud eyes that will not look down.
Be as the sun in her glory,
Who dances across the blue day,
And flings her red soul, fierce-burning,
Into the arms of the twilight.
Ai-yee! Foolish one, woman,
Be as the sun and the moon!
Cast the strange doubts from thy bosom!
Wash the red shame from thy face!
Thou art a woman, a woman!
Beat against me no longer!
Be not afraid of my eyes!

THE CONJURER

Come ye, spirits three! *To be chanted.*
Out of the East, out of the West, out of the North!
Rise ye, má-ni-dó, from your weég-a-wams
In the corners of the earth!
Blow, blow, blow thy raging tempests
Through the ranks of whining pine!
Come ye! Come ye to my chéc-sah-kán
Riding on thy crazy-running winds.
Hear! Hear my potent chantings!
Bestow me the strength to work my conjurings!
Hi! Take ye my good medicine,
This precious skin of the jumping-rat
Killed in the hour when death,
When purple death walked into my lodge,—
And three moons, three moons dried
On the grave of my youngest son.
Hi! Hear me! Hear me, má-ni-dó!

Come ye, spirits three!
Out of the East, out of the West, out of the North!
Hi! Blow, blow, blow thy whirling winds!
Sway my wigwam, sway it
With the breathings of the cyclone!
Hi! Bend its birchen poles

Like the reeds in yonder bay!
Hi! Clutch my teepee, bend it
Till its peak shall scrape the ground!
Hear me! Hear me, má-ni-dó! . . .

. . . . .

How! How!
Behold! my friends, it bends
Like a lily in the storm!

Brokenly, conversationally, in an "aside" to the audience.

. . . . .

Come ye, spirits three!

To be chanted.

Out of the East, out of the West, out of the North!
On the wings of the wind send into my lodge
The lean spirit of a lean coyote—
Of the dying prairie wolf whose whimperings
We followed many sleeps across the desert.
Make him, má-ni-dó, fling up again
His last long mournful wailings
When thirst and hunger clutched
His withered aching throat—
That the old men of my tribe may hear
Again his ghostly callings as of old.
Hear me! Hear me, má-ni-dó! . . .

. . . . .

How! How!
Ho! There is a power
In my precious ratskin!

Conversationally in an "aside."

. . . . .

Come ye, spirits three!

To be chanted.

Out of the East, out of the West, out of the North!
On the wings of the wind send into this lodge
The spirit of Sings-in-the-Hills

Who walked to his death in his birch canoe
Over the falls of the Cut-Foot Waters.
Blow his spirit into my lodge,
That his aged father who sits without
May hear his voice again.
Hear me! Hear me, má-ni-dó!
Make his ghost to talk from my lodge
That the people who watch my juggling
May know his voice again. . . .

. . . . .

How! How! *Conversationally.*
Hear, my people?
My medicine-skin is strong with power!

. . . . .

Hear ye, spirits three! *To be chanted.*
Go ye back to thy weég-a-wams
In the corners of the earth!
Into the East, into the West, into the North!
Leash again the wolves of the wind. . . .
To thee, O Má-ni-dó of the East,
This handful of burning balsam
Which I fling on the dying wind;
To thee, O Má-ni-dó of the West,
This handful of yellow medicine,
Powder of precious clays;
To thee, O Má-ni-dó of the North,
This red-willow twig whereon I have rubbed
My potent medicine ratskin.
Go ye back, ye má-ni-dó,
To the corners of the earth!
Hah-eeee-yóoooooooooo!

. . . . .

How! How! *Conversationally.*
Enter ye the teepee, my friends!
Unbind ye the basswood cords from my body!
I am done!
How! How!

RED-ROCK, THE MOOSE-HUNTER

Bronze in the rose-dusted twilight,
A statue of bronze, arms uplifted,
He stands ankle-deep in the lilies
As rigidly fixed and as silent
As a red granite butte on the prairie,
As still as the dusk in the foot-hills—
"Ugh! Red-Rock, big hunter-of-moose!
Red-Rock, him fool-um old bull!
Red-Rock, big moose-killer!—Ugh!"
Bronze in the tranquil sunset,
Statuesque bronze in the willows.

A sudden rush through the lilies;
A splashing of flashing limbs,
Shattering his mirror of silver,—
Juggling his gold-glinted rainbows,
And flinging them into the winds;
A sudden swoop through the waters,
A sudden scoop of the hands,—
And bronze in the copper twilight,
With arms uplifted he stands,
Statuesque bronze in the lilies—
"Red-Rock, big caller-of-moose!—Ugh!"

Dripping, dripping, dripping
Blue-shimmering drops through his fingers;

Dripping, dripping, dripping
Thin tinkling streams from his palms;
Plashing, plashing, plashing
Cupped handfuls of silvery waters
Splashing among the lilies,—
Black bronze in the purple twilight,
Statuesque bronze in the night—
"Red-Rock! Big hunter-of-moose!—Ugh!"

A long low call from the valley;
A bellow, an echoing bugle
Mellow and deep with the passion
Of lone longing male for his mate:
"Hark! Hark! sweet One-in-the-Lilies!
Ho! my Splashing-One! Ho!
I come!—with my limbs aquiver!
I come!—with a straining of flanks!"

Beat-beating, beat-beating, beat-beating,
Long-loping feet in the forest;
A clashing of horn in the timber,
A crashing of hoofs in the brush,—
A splash in the placid bayou,
An eager nose to the air,
And lo! a palpitant bellow,
A wild-ringing rapturous blare! . . .

Black bronze in the cool blue moonlight!
Black statuesque bronze in the night!
Cupped hands to the stars uplifted,—
Dripping, dripping, dripping

Thin tinkling streamlets of silver,
Soft-plashing fountains of silver,
Shimmering-blue sprinklings of silver—
"Red-Rock! Big killer-of-moose!—Ugh!"

RAIN SONG

Motive I

To be read with the vigorous beat of dance rhythm.

God of the Thunders, Thunder-God,
Hear thou our medicine rattles!
Hear! Hear our sounding drums!
Hi! Our medicine bag on yonder rock
Has a power, a big-good medicine power—
Three silver scales of the Great Sea Monster—
Ho! Big rain-medicine! Strong rain-medicine! Ho!
Ugh! Behold! On the rock by the stream the Beast
Has placed three scales from his slimy belly—
Ho! Big medicine! Ho! Strong medicine!—
Silver scales of the Big Sea Monster!
Hi! Spirit-of-Thunder, come in thy fury,
Come with thy wet winds, come with thy many waters;
Come in thy wrath against thy foe
That taunts thee there with his filthy poison.
All the children of the earth are good,
Heap-good in the heart to the Thunders;
All the children of the earth are bitter—
Ugh!—bitter to thy foe, the Demon!—
We spit!—Behold! we spit on him!
Come with a heart that is good to thy children—
Ho! And big-many waters and heap-much rain!
Come with a heart that is bad to our enemy—

Ho! And big-much lightning, plenty-big storm!
Ho! Silver-wing God, with thy swift wet feet,
Come! Come! Come in thy big black war clouds!
Hurl thy arrows of flashing flame!
Rush at our foe with thy whirlwind waters!
Crush with thy storms the stinking beast
That defies thee here with his slimy poison—
Ho! Big medicine! Ho! Strong medicine!—
Silver scales of the Big Sea Snake!

Ho!

Motive II

Hah-yée! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o!
God of the Thunders, Thunder-God,
Hear thou our medicine rattles!
Hear! Hear our sounding drums!

Dance rhythm ceases. To be chanted with a minor wail.

Two moons the mountain brooks have been dry,
And the panting birds like ghosts in a row,
Sit in the shade and sing no longer.
Our Brother, the Sun, can find his face
No more in the shining-glass of the river;
His eyes see nothing but yellow cracked mud
As wrinkled as the skins of our old women!
Eagerly the sunflower lifts her mouth to the dew,
Yet her lips parch and her head droops,
And her leafy arms grow thin and wither!

Ai-yee! Thunderer, Spirit of the Big Waters,
With burning tongues all the children of the earth—

The flower-people and the hungry grasses,
The sky-flyers and the water-walkers—
All, all are calling, calling, calling to thee!—
Hear! Hear our many, many callings!
Hah-yée! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o!

Thick with hot dust the old men of the forest
Stand with bended heads, complaining wearily,
Grumbling ever at the hot winds,
Mumbling ever of the beating sun.
Among the brittle pines the fires run
With many swift feet through the crackling bushes;
And the deer, like whirling leaves in the wind,
Scurry madly before their scorching breath.
The sweet wet grass of our valley-meadows
Is blown by the hot winds into powder;
And our ponies nibble at rustling rushes.
Like the papoose that puts its hungry mouth
To the scrawny breast of an old squaw,
The corn thirstily sucks at the earth—
In the blistered earth there is dust, dust!
And my brothers talk with thick hot tongues,
And my people walk with skinny bellies,
And die like the burning grass of the prairies!

Ai-yee! Thunderer, Spirit of the Big Waters,
With parching mouths all the children of the earth—
The many-foot-walkers and the belly-creepers,
The timber-beasts and the all-over-the-earth-walkers—
All, all are calling, calling, calling to thee!

Hear! Hear their many, many callings!
Hah-yée! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o! Hah-yó-ho-o-o-o!

Ugh!
Ugh!

Motive III

To be read with great vigor, and with the lilt and the steady beat of dance rhythm.

Háh-yaaaaaaah! Háh-yaaaaaaah!
Háh-yaaaaaaah! Háh-yaaaaaaah!
God of the Thunders, Thunder-God,
Hear thou our medicine rattles!
Hear! Hear our sounding drums!
Hi-yee! Behind the clouds on the far horizon,
Beat, beat, beat on thy crashing war drums!
Hí! Hí! Hí! To the war-dance beat,
Shake the earth with thy stamping feet!
Over the fires of the blazing sky
Fling thy blankets of thick wet mist!
Roll from the hills the wet gray fog!
Blow from the hills the cool wet winds!

Hí! Come! Come! Come, thou God of the Thunder!
Come on thy whirling winds from the West!
Come with a rush of thy wings of silver!
Crush our foe with thy tramping feet!
Hí! Hí! Hí! With thy flame-plumed war club,
Crack the skies in wrath asunder;
And pour from thy hand through thy silver fingers
Cool sweet-waters on the panting earth!

Ho! Wingéd-One of the rumbling rain clouds,
With thy war drums, sky drums, call thy Water-Spirits.
On thy serpent-foe—we spit on him!—
Let loose thy fire-flashing Thunder!
Ho! Big Tornado! Ho! Thou Cyclone!
Rouse from slumber, dash from the North!
Ho! Big Hand-Walker, who goes head down,
With twirling legs that walk in the sky,
Come over the plains with thy trailing hair
Of tangled winds and twisting rains!

Ho! Thou God of the Thunder-drums,
Pour from thy hands the many-many waters:
Ho! Rains like clouds of silver lances,
Cool long rains that slant from the West;
Rains that walk on gentle little moccasins,
Softly slipping from the fogs in the East;
Cold white rains from the Land-of-Winter,
Dripping in the trees, beating on the birchbark;
Soft rains, gray rains, rains that are gentle,
Swift rains, big rains, rains that are windy—
Rains, rains, many-many rains!

Hi! Thou God of the Sounding Thunder,
Split the clouds with thy club asunder!
Come! Come! Come with thy stamping feet!
Hí! Hi! Hí! To the war-dance beat!
Bitter in the heart to the Great Sea Monster;
Bitter to our foe; bitter to his poison—

Ho! Big medicine! Ho! Strong medicine!
Silver scales of the Big Sea Snake!

Ho! Ho!

Medicine Man to the Assembled Tribe:

Go to thy wigwams, my people.
Already the morning star is high.
Sleep with untroubled hearts. *Conversationally in a matter-of-fact tone.*

Come tomorrow to the dancing-ring;
The doctors will then dance the Thanks-Song.
Bring presents—Ho!—and plenty grub!

Medicine Man to a Fellow Medicine Man:

Ugh! Lame-Wolf! . . . Tobacco! . . .
Ugh! . . . I spit on your red-willow tobacco!
It has no teeth! It is for squaws! *Brusquely.*
Give me your white man's tobacco—
The black stick with the stuck-on silver dog! . . .

Ho!

PART II

LONE FIRES

THE LOON

A lonely lake, a lonely shore,
A lone pine leaning on the moon;
All night the water-beating wings
Of a solitary loon.

With mournful wail from dusk to dawn
He gibbered at the taunting stars—
A hermit-soul gone raving mad,
And beating at his bars.

GOD IS AT THE ANVIL

God is at the anvil, beating out the sun;
Where the molten metal spills,
At His forge among the hills
He has hammered out the glory of a day that's done.

God is at the anvil, welding golden bars;
In the scarlet-streaming flame
He is fashioning a frame
For the shimmering silver beauty of the evening stars.

PHILOSOPHIC FROGS

A congress of bullfrogs jowl-deep in the slime,
To the droll moon was croaking its notions of rime.
And puffy with pride each wight in the throng
Expounded with vigor the charm of his song:

"Gr-rump! Gr-rump!" bellowed Green-back, "I sing of the mud; oh, the beautiful, beautiful mud!"
And he flopped his big belly—ker-plunk!—in the clay with a heave and a terrible thud.

"Quite r-right! Quite r-right!" rejoined the philosophic band,
"Sing of the true, the real, of the common thing at hand."

"Ker-r-r-chug!" piped Yellow-Vest, "I sing of the slimy pond;
Eternal Beauty is there, and not in the moons beyond."

"Yer-r r-right!" quoth Plunk, "but don't be silly;
Praise not the slime, but its fruitage, the lily."

"Get along-ng-ng! though flowers are sweet,"
scoffed Blink, "we'll not concede a jot!
Vermin nest in the hearts of flowers; all lilies
are touched with rot!"

"Jug-o'-r-r-rum!" croaked Puff, "why sing of the
stars, so cold, remote, and high!
I pray to a closer, warmer light; I sing of the
firefly!"

And thus deriding the heavenly host, this tribe with
vocal might
And philosophic grunt held forth through many a
summer night. . . .

Autumn marched in with its bluster and blow;
And winter rushed down with a whirling of snow.
The swamp-world lay dead and th' amphibian choir
Slept songless and lean in the beautiful mire,
Where the muck-rooted lilies and slender reeds
Were a mess of rank rubbish and rotting weeds.
And the will-o'-the-wisp, the substitute star,
The ideal of Life, of "things as they are,"
Curled up his carcass and jerked up his knees,—
His lamp flickered out in the first autumn breeze.

And the placid old moon widely yawned, slyly blinked;
And the stars with a chuckle looked pond-ward, and
winked!

THE WOLF CRY

The Arctic moon hangs overhead;
The wide white silence lies below.
A starveling pine stands lone and gaunt,
Black-penciled on the snow.

Weird as the moan of sobbing winds,
A lone long call floats up from the trail;
And the naked soul of the frozen North
Trembles in that wail.

THE CABIN ON THE CLIFF

The little cabin seems to wear
Such a panic-stricken air,—
Clinging perilously high
Silhouetted on the sky.

There is such a tragic fear
In the furtive eyes that peer
Down upon the ocean's jaw,
Red and ravenous of maw.

Such a terror in her soul
When the casual pebbles roll,—
Oh, the frantic nervous gripping,
Fearful that her hands are slipping!

Such a never-ending dread
Of the forest overhead,—
Wondering when the inching spruce
Will crowd her aching fingers loose.

THE FOG-BELL

All the long night, all the long day,
  When the thick gray fogs of the sea were rolling,
Where combers boom in the leaden gloom,
  I heard the lugubrious fog-bell tolling.

All the long night, all the long day,
  With a sullen song and a voice grown weary,
The slow-tongued bell at each long low swell,
  Complained of a life abysmally dreary.

All the long night, all the long day,
  Rest from the tides! was the theme of her moaning;
But the thin-lipped surge, a pitiless urge,
  Cracked his white lash and jeered at her groaning.

THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN

To C. S.

I know a mountain, lone it lies
Under wide blue Arctic skies.

Gray against the crimson rags
Of sunset loom its granite crags.

Gray granite are the peaks that sunder
The clouds, and gray the shadows under.

Down the weathered gullies flow
Waters from its crannied snow;

Tumbling cataracts that roar
Cannonading down the shore;

And rivulets that hurry after
With a sound of silver laughter.

Up its ramparts winds a trail
To a clover-meadowed vale,

High among the hills and woods
Locked in lonely solitudes.

Only wild feet can essay
The perils of that cragged way.

And here beneath the rugged shoulders
Of the granite cliffs and boulders,

In the valley of the sky
Where tranquil twilight shadows lie,

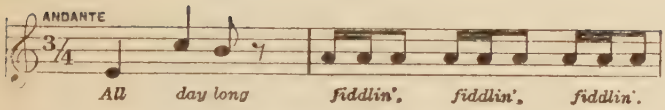
Hunted creatures in their flight
Find a refuge for the night.

DAKOTAH

Vast is the silent far-flung plain,
Shouldering its fields of rippling grain.

Wide are the winds that hurry by,
Out of the stretch of the prairie sky.

And the far horizons seem to be
But a hint of a Vast Infinity.

THE WHITE-THROAT

Deep in the somber solitude,
Where only curious stars intrude,
In the sultry blight of August haze,
Or the rain-washed air of April days,
The white-throat flutes in cadence long
His golden rivulet of song:
"All-day-long-fiddlin', fiddlin', fiddlin'."

What joy he feels, what pride he takes
In the simple tune he makes!
He never envies Robin's trills;
He never seems to care for frills—
Just content in a humble way
On his single golden string to play:
"All-day-long-fiddlin', fiddlin', fiddlin'."

O lone drab singer! never weary
When other brilliant birds are dreary,
Teach me my humble task to do
With buoyant faith and courage true;
With a gladsome heart in sun or rain
To sing unheard the brave refrain:
"All-day-long-fiddlin', fiddlin', fiddlin'."

REFUGE

When stars ride in on the wings of dusk,
  Out on the silent plain,
After the fevered fret of day,
  I find my strength again.

Under the million friendly eyes
  That smile in the lonely night,
Close to the rolling prairie's heart,
  I find my heart for the fight.

Out where the cool long winds blow free,
  I fling myself on the sod;
And there in the tranquil solitude
  I find my soul,—and God.

SWAMP-OWL

A brooding pond in the hush of dusk,
  As black as the pools of night;
Rimmed round with spires of somber spruce,—
  Gaunt ghosts in the phantom light.

A beating of heavy wings in the dark;
  A rush from the dismal glen;
A sudden swoop, and the leaden wings
  Went beating back again.

In the utter gloom of that sunken land,
  Never a creature stirred,
As night beat into the sullen swamp
  With the wings of that ghostly bird.

OF THESE FOUR THINGS I CANNOT WRITE

Of these four Things I cannot write:

After the scourge of the molten sands of the desert,
After the sunken hot eyes and the panting tongue,—
The thrill of the cool blue springs in the foothills,
The cold-fingered dew on the lips parched and blazing,
And the silvery tinkle of green glacial waters
That sprinkle the throbbing brow. . . .

After the anguish of hot leaden limbs on the portage,
After the feverish days over deadland trails,—
The repose of the gray-veiled and quiet-eyed twilight,
The shimmering haze of the blue mountain valley,
And the tranquil blue deep of the pool where tremulous
Sleep the calm swimming stars. . . .

After the footfalls of sinister night in the gullies,
After the ominous moan of the canyoned winds,—
The touch of a quiet gray Presence beside me,
The confident sense of Hands hovering about me,
And the Call from the hills where the murmurous river
Spills over the white cascades. . . .

And when at last, struggling to utter
The cry of these three glories,
My pen shall cease to stutter across the page,—
Shall be no longer a futile stammering thing,
But a burning soul, articulate,—
Then I shall sing! Oh, then I shall sing
Of the glorious whole of these wild splendors!
Oh, then I shall sing of the eyes,
Of the dusky eyes of a Woman.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

When I drift out on the Silver Sea,
O may it be
A blue night
With a white moon
And a sprinkling of stars in the cedar tree;
And the silence of God,
And the low call
Of a lone bird,—
When I drift out on the Silver Sea.

PART III

CHIPPEWA MONOLOGUES

A Group of Indian Council Talks

THE WINDS OF FIFTY WINTERS*

The Weasel-Eye, the hawk-nosed one,
With the long white beard and soft white hands,
Arose before the Pillagers and Ottertails
Who squatted by the council-fire.
Fixing on his nose the little windows,
And putting on his face a pretty smile,
The Weasel-Eye "made talk, big talk":

THE WEASEL-EYE TALKS:

"My brothers, good red brothers,
Brothers each and all,
By me, his honest trusted agent
Whose heart is good to the Indian,
The Great White Chief sends greetings
To his good red children—
Ah! and many pretty presents!

To be read with a patronizing air in a florid, declamatory manner.

(*Ho!*
Hi-yah! Hi-yah!
How! How! How!)

"Gaze ye!—Flashing silver-glass
And tinkling copper bells!
And powder kegs and beads,

* For supplementary notes on "The Winds of Fifty Winters" and other poems in Part III, see *Appendix*, page 71.

And tall black shining hats!
Ye shall walk arrayed
Like yon gorgeous blazing sun
If ye but heed my counsel.

(*Ho! Ho! Ho!*)

"Go ye North!
Forsake these rolling hills;
This vast, too-vast country.
Forsake these wolf-infested forests,
That Pale-Face tillers of the soil
May lay their Iron-Roads
And scratch the ground for harvests.
Go ye North! to the barren lands,
To the land of the marked-out ground.
And though there be no moose
Within its flame-swept timber,
Nor whitefish in its waters,
Nor patches of wild berries,
Nor fields of nodding rice,
Yet will ye be content
For I will pay ye well;
To every warrior, guns,—
Six beavers' worth;
To every headman, blankets,—
Red as yonder sky;
To every chieftain, ponies,—
Six, more or less.
And there, in the marked-out North,
Your tribe may eat and dance
Forever and forever."

"Gaze upon me, O my brothers,
My good red brothers,
And heed ye well my counsel!
The winds of fifty winters
Have blown about my head,
And, lo! my hair is white with snow!
The winds of fifty winters
Have blown about my head,
And, lo! much wisdom lodged therein!
And from the winds of fifty winters,
Their wisdom, storms, and snows,
Lo! I counsel ye:
Sign ye this treaty!
Take ye the presents!
Go ye to the North!"

In the council-grove long silence fell,
Save for a little laughing wind
That wandered in the pines.
Then, sinuous and supple as the wildcat,
Áh-nah-mah-keé, the "Thunder-Bolt," strode forward.
And stood a moment silent—
Straight as the Norway pine
That rears its head above yon timber;
And in his eyes the many little lightnings flashed,
But on the corner of his mouth a sunbeam played:

THUNDER-BOLT TALKS:

"O my brothers, my red brothers,
Brothers each and all,

To be read simply and quietly with an undercurrent of humor and innuendo.

The Weasel-Eye has spoken.
He has opened up his honey mouth;
And from the heart that is so good
He has poured his sounding words.
His heap-much pretty talk
Is like the tinkling stream
Of babbling sweet-water that gurgles
Down from the mountain springs.
But like the sweet-water of the brook,
That stops its pretty running
In the swamp and stands one sleep
In the deep and quiet pools,
The pretty words turn bitter-sour.

To be read in a florid, pompous manner.

"Gaze upon me, O my brothers,
My good red brothers!
The winds of fifty winters
Have blown about my head,
And, lo! my hair is white with snow!
The winds of fifty winters
Have blown about my head,
And lo! much wisdom lodged therein!
The winds of fifty winters
Have blown about my head—
But, lo! they have not blown away my brains!

I am done!"

(*Ho!*
Hi! Hi!
How! How! How!)

CHIEF BEAR'S-HEART "MAKES TALK"

To be read slowly and brokenly in deep resonant tones and in a stolid manner broken by periods of restrained emotion.

Agent-man from Keétch-ie Ó-gi-má,
Our Big W'ite Chief,
De heart of all de 'Cheebway
In my tribe are good to you;
My people want your heart
Be good to all de Eenzhuns.

In Summer-of-de-Many-Rains,
Comes Long-Blade soldier, Major Rice,
An' Black-Robes priest, for mak'-um treaty.
Dey mak'-um talk in council, so:
"'Cheebway, 'Cheebway, mak'-um treaty;
Walk on far-away reservation an' live;
You go new reservation, you get-um plenty t'ing
From Keétch-ie Ó-gi-má:
Get-um plenty grub an' money;
Plenty t'ing for belly an' for back."
Den Long-Blade stick-um one hand
On Big-Black-Book an' treaty-paper,
An' raise-um oder hand to Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó,
De w'ite man's Big Spirit, an' say:
"'Cheebway, all dose t'ing on treaty sure will be!" . . .
Ho! Eenzhun scratch-um paper;
Stick-um t'umb on treaty;
An' walk on reservation.

W'at's come treaty now! Ugh?

No got-um plenty grub!
'Cheebway got-um small flat belly;
No got-um w'ite man's big fat belly!

Comes soon de Winter-Maker,
Blowing on de river wit' hees icy breat',
An' making dem stand still
Wit' sleep beneat' de snow.
An' Nort' Wind whistle crazy-wild
T'rough crying spruce an' cedar;
An' Múk-wa, ol' fat bear, he sleep
An' sheever in hees hole;
An' Peé-nay, hungry pa'tridge,
Bury in de balsam snow-drif'.
Now walk on Eenzhun wée-ga-wam!
'Cheebway sit dere hungry,—
In winter no can get-um grub lak moose
Who paw big hole in snow for plenty moss.
No got-um plenty money;
No got-um w'ite man's grub.
Squaw, she got-um sick,—
Bad osh-kée-shee-gwá-pee-náy,—
She sick on eye lak devil-hell.
Sqúaw-sich, little gal,
She got-um measles-sick,
De Spotted-Sickness on de face.
Little boy, he got-um heap-sick,—
Bad óh-pun-náh-pee-náy,—
Bad Coughing-Sickness;

With repressed emotion—gathering in power.

Ugh! He spit all-tam'!—
Got-um sick on lung, an' hot on cheek;
Got-um eye she blaze lak wildcat! . . .
W'y should be dose t'ing?
Ugh! Go w'ite man's town:
He got-um plenty grub;
Hees belly laugh wit' grub!
W'y should be diff'rence, ha-aaah?
Mebbe w'ite man's God he want-um diff'rence! Ugh!
Mebbe Má-ni-dó no lak-um Eenzhun chil'en! Hah!
Mebbe Má-ni-dó forget-um Eenzhun chil'en! Ugh!
Mebbe so! Mebbe so! . . .

Slowly and brokenly with a note of irony.

Mebbe *no!*
Look-um straight!
Talk-um straight!
Ai-yee! Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó
He *no* forget-um 'Cheebway Eenzhun!
Eenzhun chil'en, good chil'en!
Big Spirit lak-um Eenzhun chil'en
Jus' so much he lak-um Long-Knife.
(*Ho! Ho!*
How! How!)
Inspector Taylo',
In council of olden tam'
De Long-Blade stick-um hand on Big-Black-Book,
An' raise-um oder hand to sky an' say:
"All dose t'ing on treaty-paper sure will be!"

With dramatic force.

Slowly, with subtle changes of emotion from humor and irony to sarcasm and bitterness.

Mebbe. . . .
Mebbe. . . .

Mebbe he was only fool for fun! Hah?
Ho! Long-Blade only fool for fun! Ho!

Mebbe so! . . . Mebbe so! . . .

Mebbe hees tongue talk-um
Little bit crooked! Ho?

Mebbe so! . . . Mebbe so! . . .

Mebbe he got-um forks in tongue,
Wit' little poison-gland! Ugh!
Eenzhun t'ink—
He lie! . . .

With intense dramatic force —somewhat repressed.

Look on me! . . .
Look on me! . . .
Look on me! . . .

Talk-um straight *today!*
No got-um double-snake-tongue! . . .

I have said it!

(*Ho!*
How! How!
Ho! Ho! Ho!)

LITTLE-CARIBOU MAKES "BIG TALK"

To be read brokenly in a high-pitched voice with a touch of querulousness and petulance, and an occasional note of drollery.

Boo-zhóo! Boo-zhóo!
Me, Áh-deek-kóons, I mak-um big talk.
Me, ol' man; I'm got-um sick on knee
In rainy wedder w'en I'm walk. Ugh!
Me, lak moose w'at's ol',
I'm drop-um plenty toot'!
Yet I am big man! Ho!
An' I am talk-um big! Ho!

(*Hi-yee! Blow lak moose, ol' man!*
Ho! Ho!

Hi-yi! Little-Caribou him talk
Lak Ō-mah-kah-kée, dose Bullfrog:
Big mout', big belly,
No can fight!)

Ugh! Close mout', young crazy buck!
You stop-um council-talk,
You go 'way council!
Sit wit' squaw!
You lak little poh-tóong,
Lak pollywog tad-pole:
No can jump-um
Over little piece mud;

Can only shake-um tail
Lak crazy-dam-fool! . . .

Keétch-ie Ó-gi-má, Big Preshiden',
He got-um plenty t'oughts in head;
Me, Caribou, I'm got-um plenty-good t'oughts,
Got-um plenty-good t'oughts in head.
Yet Eenzhun-Agent all-tam' saying:
"Áh-deek-kóons, he crazy ol' fool!"
Ugh! *He* crazy ol' fool!

Keétch-ie Ó-gi-má long tam' ago
Was say in Pine Point Treaty:
"All de 'Cheebway should be farmer;
All will get from Washin'ton gov'ment
Good allotment farm land,
One hondred-sixty acre each." Ho!
Ho! Eenzhun scratch-um treaty!
Stick-um t'umb on treaty!

W'at's come treaty? Hah?
Eenzhun got-um hondred-sixty acre,
But got-um too much little pieces,—
Pieces scattered over lake
Lak leaves she's blow by wind.
In tam'rack swamp by Moose Tail Bay
He got-um forty acre piece.
Ten mile away, on Lake of Cut-Foot Sioux,
In múish-kaig an' in rice-field,
He got-um forty acre more.
On Bowstring Lake, she's t'orty-mile away,

In sand and pickerel weed,
He got-um forty acre more.
Hondred mile away, on Lac La Croix,
W'ere lumberman is mak' big dam
For drive-um log,—an' back-um up water
All over Eenzhun allotment land,—
He got-um forty acre more,—all under lake!
How can Eenzhun be good farmer! Ugh?
He's got-um land all over lake!
He's got-um land all under lake!
For Eenzhun be good farmer
Eenzhun should be good for walking under water!
Should be plow hees land wit' clam-drag!
Should be gadder potato crops wit' fish-net!
For Eenzhun be good farmer
Eenzhun should be fish!
Ugh!

I have said it!

(*Ho! Ho! Ho!*
Hi! Hi! Plenty-big talk!
How!)

WHIRLING-RAPIDS TALKS

Boo-zhóo! Inspector Taylor!
I, Wah-wee-yáh-tun-ung, Chief Whirling-Rapids,
Make this talk, "big talk," for all my people
Sitting there in the pines.

To be read stolidly and monotonously with deep resonant tones.

In eighteen eighty-nine
The Long-Blade, Major Rice,
Called council with the Ojibways on Pine Point,
And there he made this big and pretty talk:
K'tchée-gah-mee Indians, men of the land of the Big-Water,
Today we will make a good treaty;
Go to the marked-out reservation;
Here will come no white men;
Here will ye hunt and dance in peace,
Free from all the Long-Knives."

Ho! Good talk! Pretty talk!

(*Ho!*
Ugh!
Ho! Ho!)

Ugh! Talk now of the Treaty of Pine Point!
Comes too much white man on the reservation!

My people know the story!
It is marked on the slashed pine,
And the burned timbers,
And the scratched earth.
Came the trappers for our beaver;
Came the crazy Iron-Roads,
And the crazy Fire-Wagons,
Blowing Devil's-Noise,
Puffing Devil's-Breath—
Ugh!
Came the loggers with their axes,
With their flashing iron axes;
And our mighty forests trembled
From the cursings—from the clashings
Of the irons everywhere—
Ugh!
Came the rat-eyed little traders
With their shining silver clocks,
Their eésh-kwo-dáy-wah-bóo,
Their plenty Fire-Water,
Their plenty Devil's-Spit—
Ugh!
Came many, many Long-Knives,
Pretty on the outside,
Rotten in the heart;
From the many, many towns
Came many waves of white men—
Big wave, big wave,
Wave, wave, wave.
And my people wither like the oak-leaves;
And hunger stalks about my village;

And sickness spots my little children;
And often in the Moon-of-Freezing
The chantings for the dead are as many
As the wailings of the starving panthers.
Ai-yeee! Pity us!
Ai-yeee! Pity us!

From this point the poem should be read with a sustained chant, rising in pitch, increasing in volume and gathering power.

Little wave, little wave,
Big wave, big wave,
Wave, wave, wave,—
So comes the white man in the North,
Like the waters of the ocean.
On the waters of that sea walks the Indian
In his frail and battered Chée-mon,
In his dancing birch canoe,
And he paddles from the dawn to the twilight.
Comes the little rippling water on the bow,
Little white fingers rippling on the birch-bark,
Rippling white fingers blowing in the breeze.
Comes little wave of white men,
Little wave, little wave,
Many pretty waves.

Comes bigger wave of white men,
Bigger wave of white men,
Big waves, big waves,
Tumbling into the silver shore,
Rumbling as they come;
Foaming, roaring, leaping billows,
Bending like the weeping willows,
Rolling up and tumbling over,

Rolling,
Rolling,
Rolling up and rolling under,
Growling with a mighty thunder,—
Higher, higher, wildly leaping higher—
Flashing tongues across the sky,
Fire in the crackling clouds, fire!—
Wave, wave, wave,
Rolling up and tumbling over,
Shattering silver spray
On the Indian in the Chée-mon,
Battering iron fists upon his birch-bark,—
Crazy laughing crazy-waters,
Crazy hands and crazy arms
Splashing wildly in the wind,
Crashing madly on the tossing birch-bark,
Smashing wildly at the wailing 'Cheebway . . .
And the Indian walking on the waters
Flings his chantings to the Spirits in the sky:

"Hah-eee-ooooo! Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó,
I sing the chant of death!
O pity me!
And stop the crazy-waters,
Ai-yee! the rolling waves of white men. . . .
O pity me!
Hah-eee-ooooo! Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó!
I am asking with a good heart
That——

To be read with wailing and chanting.

"Ai-yee! The Spirit cannot hear me;
Nothing does he hear

But the clashing iron axes,
The rumblings of the waters,
And the cursings in the timber on the
shore. . . .

Chanting ceases. With dramatic force slightly repressed, and wailing.

"Ai-yee! He hurls his balls of fire,
Fiercely crashing in the timber,—
In the timber
There is Death!

"O pity me!

"Ai-yee! He lashes at his clouds,
At his frightened shivering clouds,
With his whips
Of cracking wind!

"O pity me!

"Ai-yee! He lunges with his spear,
With his double-lightning spear,
At the trembling
Little Chée-mon!

"O pity me! . . .
O pity me! . . ."

. . . . .

Look! He plunges at the wailing 'Cheebway—
Look!—With crazy hands of crazy-waters! . . .

Lo! and Death walks with the Indian
On the bottom of the lake,
Beneath the crazy-waters,
Crashing up and rolling over . . .
Crashing up . . . and rolling over . . .
Crashing up . . . and rolling over . . .
Rolling . . . rolling . . .
Rolling over . . . over . . .
Rolling . . . rolling . . . rolling . . .

. . . . .

Now the dripping sun is laughing in the rainbow-sky,
On the quivering silver birches on the land;
And the laughing little waters with their little white feet, *Quietly with a lilt.*
Run pattering on the shifting yellow sand.
But the Devil-Spirit, Múch-ie Má-ni-dó,
Is walking on the bottom of the lake,
In the drifting tangled weeds,
In the water shimmering green
Where the fishes flash
And shiver in the sun.
He is shaking his big belly,
He is winking his red eye
At the Long-Knife who stands chuckling
Where the waters wash the shore,
At the buzzard-taloned white man
Who stands gazing at the bottom of the waters.

Ugh! Crazy Long-Knife! . . .

Ugh! Crazy Devil! . . .

Quietly and brokenly—with sharp changes of emotion.

Ai-ee! Drifting body
That lies tangled in the weeds! . . .

I have said it!

(*Ho!*
How! How! How!
Ho!)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The following supplementary notes concerning the legends and superstitions which form the background of certain of the poems of Indian theme in Parts I and III may prove helpful to the reader. It is suggested, therefore, that if he wishes to grasp their full meaning, he read the notes in the Appendix before reading the poems in these two groups.

FLYING MOCCASINS

THE BLUE DUCK

"The Blue Duck" is a poetic interpretation of an American Indian medicine dance. In early autumn the tribe, which has gathered in the dancing-ring, is supposed to have placed on a pole by the shore of Ah-bi-tóo-bi (Half-full-of-water),—a lake adjoining the Indian village,—a crudely carved wooden duck. The ceremony is begun by the drummers who beat monotonously upon the drums. The singers and the dancers then begin to stamp and to shout and to grunt, and finally to dance. The chief medicine men —priests, "mystery men," who by virtue of their special, powerful medicine songs and their rare "med-

icines" are thought to have supernatural power in influencing the spirits with which the earth, the sea, and the sky are inhabited—finally break into a song and sometimes a chant, in which they invoke Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, "The Big Spirit," to send down from the North a big flight of ducks for the fall hunt, "to make a good duck season."

"Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó," a word which appears in many of the poems, means literally, "Big Spirit,"—broadly, "The Great Mystery." "The Big God." In the mind of the American Indian of pagan faith, the world is full of spirits, good and evil; the spirits of beasts, of birds, and of the dead; the spirits of the four winds, of the storm and of thunder and of lightning,—the several lieutenants of the "Big Spirit." But above all these minor deities rules Keétch-ie Má-ni-dó, the All-Powerful One.

"The Blue Duck" and the other interpretations of Indian dances should be read aloud. Their rhythmic beat should be maintained vigorously and steadily, except where the dancing ceases and periods of chanting are noted.

CHIPPEWA FLUTE SONG

Notwithstanding the seeming chaos and lack of melody in Indian song, the Indian is very musical. Every phase of his life and every aspiration finds expression in some lyric burst of music. There are religious songs, hunting songs, and medicine songs; dream

songs, lullabies, and love songs; war-dance, pipe-dance, and social dance songs; gambling-game songs, songs narrating personal achievements, songs to accompany gifts and songs of thanks, songs for the spirits, songs for the dead, and songs to heal the sick,—songs without number. In all his music there are many weird, haunting qualities,—certain qualities and certain motives which American musicians might profitably study, and develop into a distinctive American contribution to musical history. Indian music may be instrumental,—as for example the music of the Bée-bee-gwún, the Indian flute,—or it may be vocal. The latter may be accompanied, as in the dances, the medicine songs, and similar ceremonies, by drums and rattles, or it may be unaccompanied.

All Indian music, despite its seeming formlessness, its complexity, and its cacophony, is for the most part quite simple, and fairly definite in form. In most of his songs he uses but few simple notes, and these usually in downward progression, beginning with high falsetto tones and ending in low guttural sounds, punctuated with an occasional slurred note, a slide, a quaver, a wail, a call, or an explosive shout.

Although the "Chippewa Flute Song" will yield its melody through any one of several simple methods of interpretation that will occur to the reader, if in interpreting the poem aloud he will improvise his own melody, merely bearing in mind the suggestion that he should chant the words softly with an occasional downward slide at the end of every sentence —not line—and at other points where the voice natu-

rally falls, he will most accurately catch the spirit of the poem and of the original situation which I have sought to express.

THE SQUAW-DANCE

"The Squaw-Dance," or "Woman's Dance," often called the "Give-Away Dance," is a poem written from the point of view of the "outsider" and descriptive of a very common Chippewa social dance in which both men and women may participate. In the United States, bands of Indians often gather at some reservation village to celebrate the Fourth of July with a big "war-dance" to which white men are invited. Generally, however, the "war-dance" is really the rollicking, social "Squaw-Dance"; the celebration is called a "war-dance" often for the benefit of the gullible, thrill-hunting tourist to whom all Indian music is alike.

In the course of the dancing it is customary for the Indian to present a gift,—a bit of tobacco, a trinket, a pair of moccasins,—to some friend, either a man or a woman. Whereupon the recipient must dance with the friend thus complimenting him, and return the honor with a gift of equal value. And thus with these frequent interruptions due to the "giving away" of presents, the celebration continues all day with much vigorous dancing, loud laughter, and lusty singing. The Squaw-Dance celebration has no place for a melancholy, moribund person, or for a dour, dyspeptic misanthrope.

BEAT AGAINST ME NO LONGER

In this interpretation of an Indian love song the lines beginning, "Be not as the flat-breasted sqúaw-sich . . . who hides three sleeps in the forest . . .," refer to an old Algonquian custom that a young girl in the period of puberty must leave the village in shame and must live alone for a certain period of time in a wigwam in the wilderness.

THE CONJURER

The chée-sah-kée, the conjurer or juggler, is a sort of mystery-man who works in league with the bad spirits and Múch-ie Má-ni-dó, the Devil-Spirit, rather than with the good spirit-helpers of the medicine men, —although some conjurers may be both chée-sah-kée and medicine men. This magician is regarded by the older superstitious folk,—and by many pagan Indians today,—as possessing the power to establish a league with the evil spirits, whereby he may perform great feats of magic and of spiritualism. In one of his performances the juggler is bound with ropes of tough bark and is placed in the chée-sah-kán, his specially built teepee, the poles of which are so stout and so deeply planted in the earth that they cannot be moved by a human being. The conjurer then chants his "magic song," uses his "charms," invokes the aid of the spirits, and thereby performs the feats sug-

gested in this poem,—if his medicine is "strong." (If a conjurer or medicine man ever fails, it is not the fault of the religion, or of the philosophy; the medicine was "bad," or some jealous spirit treacherously worked against him.) "The Conjurer" is a very free interpretation of the chant which the chée-sah-kée sings as he lies bound in the wigwam and performs his conjurings. The short, isolated, indented stanzas in the poem are the conjurer's "asides" to his Indian audience.

Naturally one may be skeptical about the power of a man to work these wonders. Nevertheless, they are actually performed by Indian "doctors" today. My Indian friend, Áh-zhay-waince, "Other-Side," a medicine man of the Pigeon River Reservation, can perform these feats and many others as mysterious.

RED-ROCK, THE MOOSE-HUNTER

When the primitive Indian of the Canadian North went hunting, he "called" or lured moose by two methods. Sometimes with a bit of birch-bark he would imitate the call of a moose. This scheme still survives among woods Indians, and is familiar to the white man. In the other lesser-known method, during the quiet evening when it is the habit of moose to come out of the "bush" to the lakes, to drink, to feed upon the lilies, and to plunge into the water in order to shake off the moose-flies, the deer-flies, and the "no-see-ums," the moose-hunting Indian

would wade into the water of a "plug-hole" or "good moose-lake." Here for hours he would imitate the splashings and the drippings of feeding moose, on the theory that moose in the vicinity would in the quiet evening hear the sounds and be attracted by them. This primitive, little-known method lies at the foundation of the poem, "Red-Rock, the Moose-Hunter."

RAIN SONG

This interpretation of an Algonquian-Lenape medicine song for "making rain" is based upon an old Indian superstition. During this medicine dance a buckskin sack containing small mica-like scales is placed on a boulder by a stream near the dancing-ground. These bits of mica,—the "rain-medicine," —are believed to be scales from the body of the legendary Great Horned Sea Monster. It is believed that if these scales are thus exposed during the ceremony, the Thunderer and his allies, the Thunder-Spirits and the Rain-Spirits, who loathe the Sea Monster, will come with the fury of their storms and clouds and rains to attack their traditional enemy who has the impudence to lift his head out of the stream, and the effrontery to expose a part of his body to the gaze of the Thunder-Beings.

The conversational section at the close of the poem is not a part of the song proper. I have added these typical colloquial "asides" to illustrate the contrast

between the loftiness and the idealizations often attained in Indian song and ceremony, and the commonplaceness and the realities of much of his extra-ceremonial, colloquial talk. Similarly, my desire to keep the characters in this book true to type, a type that is peculiar in its combination of idealism and materialism, the beautiful and the crass or vulgar, the primitive and the modern,—this desire accounts for many of the incongruities, the strange idioms, and the inelegant phrases in "Rain Song" and in certain other poems.

The "Rain Song" most clearly illustrates the philosophy and the practices of the medicine men. Many Indians, even in this day, have utter faith in the power of the medicine men to accomplish miracles of healing, jugglery, and wonder-working. I have already commented briefly upon their practices; by virtue of their rare medicines,—herbs, clays, skins, substances of all sorts having "power,"—and with the aid of their medicine songs which came to them in a dream from the spirits, these "mystery men" are powerful with the gods. In addition, every medicine man has a special "helper" and adviser, a spirit,—generally that of some bird or beast,—with whom he constantly communes, and of whom he is but the mouthpiece. To illustrate, the night preceding the day set for the ceremonial feast at which I was to be christened or blessed with a Chippewa name, my Indian godfather, Āh-zhay-waince, "Other-Side," had a dream in which his special spirit-guide advised him concerning the name that I should bear. And

after the feast, when Áh-zhay-waince blessed me with the name Páy-shig-ah-deék, "Lone-Caribou," the old mystery-man made a talk in eulogy of his special má-ni-dó and declared that he was acting merely as the agent of his "strong" spirit-helper, the "Thunder-Bird," one of the extremely powerful Thunder-Gods mentioned in the "Rain Song." Thus because of their power to secure the influence and the advice of these "strong helpers" and the other ghosts of the spirit world, the medicine men may be called upon to appease the wrath of the spirits in times of drought; or to drive out of a sick Indian the bad spirits which it is believed possess him; to regulate the weather; or to invoke the aid of the gods whenever the tribe enters upon some great task. The utter faith of some of the older folk in the power of the medicine man is illustrated by the following incident:

One day I journeyed to the wigwam of Mis-kwée-mee-giz-zí, "Blood-Eagle," an old Chippewa (sometimes written and pronounced "Ojibway") to induce him to join in a canoe trip. I found the old fellow sitting in the sun in front of his cedar shack, morose and stolid, with a high fever and other significant symptoms. In reply to a question concerning the nature of the trouble, old "Eagle" grunted, "I got-um 'sumbtion" (consumption).

"Then why don't you see the doctor at the settlement?"

"I go w'ite man doctor ten sleep ago," he replied; "no damn good! I give-um wan dolla', he give-um wan glass bottle,—no-good med'cine! Tomorrow I

go Eenzhun med'cine man. He sing 'way Bad Spirits in lung. In t'ree sleep—me—I go hunt wit' you."

Needless to say Mis-kweé-mee-giz-zi didn't turn up for the trip in "t'ree sleep." The old man will never hunt again, except in the Big Hunting Ground.

CHIPPEWA MONOLOGUES

THE WINDS OF FIFTY WINTERS

The council is a meeting at which important tribal matters are discussed, a sort of informal Indian legislative assembly. In the old war days councils were frequently called between tribes to settle differences, or between Indians and white men for the making of treaties, or among the Indians of one tribe to decide tribal and local questions. In these modern days the meetings are generally held for the settlement of problems arising between the Indians and the Federal government of which the Indians are legal wards. If the United States Government, through its Indian Service in the Department of Interior, wishes to investigate tribal conditions or Indian grievances, or desires to determine tribal questions and policies, a council is called. At this meeting appear representatives of the government and spokesmen for the Indians,—generally chiefs and headmen,—who state their cases in "council talks."

The Indian audiences at these councils are very quiet, attentive, and respectful,—more courteous than the average audience of white men. They are un-

demonstrative except for an occasional grunt of approval,—represented in the poems in this group by the exclamations of "Ho! Ho!" and "How!" in italics and parentheses,—or an occasional gruff and guttural "Ugh!" or grunt of disapproval or disgust.

"The Winds of Fifty Winters" is a poetic version of a famous Chippewa council which is recalled by the older folk among the Chippewas with many chuckles.

CHIEF BEAR'S-HEART "MAKES TALK"
LITTLE-CARIBOU MAKES "BIG TALK"

The remaining poems in this group are poetic council talk interpretations suggested by speeches made at councils held by the government and Chippewa Indians for the discussion of certain alleged violations of the "Treaty of 1889," "The Treaty of 1854" and other treaties. Many of the grievances expressed in these monologues obviously represent but one point of view, the Indian's version of the dispute. Nevertheless, although many of his complaints and hardships are due to misunderstanding, to government red tape, or to the Indian's own weaknesses and defects, and are therefore often unreasonable and prejudiced, there is generally in his cause a proper share of truth and adequate grounds for complaint.

In order to give to the original Indian utterance clearness, coherence, and completeness, any Anglicized

version of a council talk must contain some of the graces of the white man's language, and some of its nuances of diction and idiom. Although such interpretations may gain in clarity, they necessarily lose much of the original Indian flavor, certain crude, rugged poetic qualities of the original expression in the Chippewa language, with its small but exceedingly suggestive vocabulary limited to strong nouns, strong verbs, and compact, colorful phrases, idioms, and figures. In order, therefore, to catch these more primitive poetic qualities, even though it be at the loss of other virtues, the two poems, "Chief Bear's-Heart 'Makes Talk,'" and "Little-Caribou Makes 'Big Talk,'" are written in the dialect spoken by some of the reservation Indians of the North,—on the theory that this broken, labored, colorful pigeon-English of the remote Indian more accurately registers certain elements of the strange charm and the rugged power of Chippewa oratory.

The phrases "Boo-zhóo!" "Boo-zhóo, boo-zhóo!" and "Boo-zhóo nee-chée!" are forms of the friendly salutation that is common among the Chippewas. They are apparently corruptions of the French "Bonjour!" of the Canadian-French voyageurs and courcurs-des-bois, many of whom have mingled with the Chippewas and have married into the tribe.

In the days of the old frontier the Indian was greatly impressed by the uniforms and the sabers of the cavalry officers. Therefore he spoke of soldiers as "Long-Blades," or "Long-Knives"; and he frequently used these terms to designate all white men.

Thus the expression "Long-Blades" in these poems means soldiers and white men.

LITTLE-CARIBOU MAKES "BIG TALK"

The American Indian is usually very deferential and courteous to the aged, not only at councils but at all ceremonies. In this poem, therefore, the interruptions by the young Indians, the "asides," and the sallies (represented in the poem by the indented stanzas in italics and parentheses) and the ensuing amusing colloquy between the shrewd patriarch, Little-Caribou, and his young hecklers, are rather unusual.

It is commonly believed that the Indian lacks humor; that he never laughs or jokes; that he is always the taciturn, sullen, stern type of the theatrical Indian. The idea is erroneous. Although in formal meetings and in his dealings with the white man the Indian is generally a man of a few simple, dignified, stern words, among his own people he laughs often and loud. Moreover, the women and children seem to be forever laughing and joking and giggling over nothing. Among the Indians, especially among the older folk, there are many droll characters that have a subtle sense of humor in addition to the dignity, the shrewdness, and the vigor which most of the better types of Indian possess. The poem, "Little-Caribou Makes 'Big Talk,'" illustrates this little-known side of Indian character and this not uncommon Indian type.

WHIRLING-RAPIDS TALKS

The allegory, "Whirling-Rapids Talks," illustrates the tendency of the Indian to symbolize all the experiences of life. This personification of nature, of every bird that soars and every beast that walks or crawls, and this symbolizing of life by moon and sun, by water, thunder, and lightning, and by the star-people of the sky,—these are of the essence of his poetic thought. Because of his conception of the walking, the swimming, and the green-growing things of the wilderness, it is safe to say that no race has ever established a contact with nature more spiritual or more vital than has the American Indian.

THE END

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